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RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000282

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [EMIN](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [IAEA](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: DRC'S ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSIONER ARRESTED

REF: A. 06 KINSHASA 1392
[1](#)B. 06 KINSHASA 1688
[1](#)C. 06 KINSHASA 1410
[1](#)D. 06 KINSHASA 1309

Classified By: EconOff W.Brafman for reasons 1.4 b/d/e.

[1](#)1. (C) The GDRC arrested the top official of the DRC's Atomic Energy Commission (CGEA) on March 6, but thus far specific charges have not been made public. According to media reports, Professor Fortunat Lumu Badimbayi-Matu, the CGEA Commissioner and director of Kinshasa's Nuclear Research Center (CREN-K), is being held in Kinshasa along with CREN-K's Scientific Director. EconOff reached Lumu by phone the morning of March 8, and although he confirmed his arrest, he said could not discuss the matter with EconOff until later in the day. According to uncorroborated information from the Congolese National Police, the investigation may widen and more arrests may occur. Further, members of the presidential circle also reportedly met to discuss the matter.

[1](#)2. (C) Initial reports in Congolese opposition newspaper Le Phare indicated CGEA officials were charged with trafficking of uranium "bars" and "casques," but subsequent reports in Le Phare and another paper have offered other possible reasons. (Comment: It is not clear what is meant by casques, but it may be a reference to the heavy, 20 square inch containers that EmbOffs saw at CREN-K during their July 2006 tour of the facility (reftel A). As noted in reftel A, during that July tour, EmbOffs found no evidence the containers were radioactive or held uranium, popular rumors notwithstanding. End comment.) One line of speculation is that the arrests are in connection with the CGEA's September 2006 partnership deal with Brinkley Africa, Ltd. a subsidiary of London Alternative Investment Market-listed Brinkley Mining (reftel B). Lumu reportedly approved this deal, for the purpose of developing nuclear research projects and mining uranium. (Note: Brinkley's website characterizes the agreement as a Memorandum of Understanding. End note.) CREN-K and the CGEA fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Scientific Research, but it is the Ministry of Mines that has the authority to approve mining concessions. The extent of involvement of either Ministry in this agreement remains opaque. Normally, mining agreements must have both ministerial and presidential approval.

[1](#)3. (C) The CREN-K facility, which includes two non-operational research reactors, has 138 nuclear fuel rods and a store of nuclear waste, to which Lumu has access (reftel C). British, Belgium and French diplomats toured CREN-K March 7, and although they did not specifically discuss the recent arrests, the diplomats neither observed nor did the facility staff mention any unusual activity. Uranium is found naturally in Katanga province, fifteen

hundred miles southeast from Kinshasa, but it is not currently industrially mined (reftel D). End note.)
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